

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

DODE-00 EB-07 COME-00 MC-02 OMB-01 /051 W

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P 061559Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5843

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL, BE

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT FIGHTER: DUTCH-BELGIUM MAY 3 "SUMMIT MEETING"

1. INFORMATION FROM DUTCH SOURCES, NOTABLY FONOFF DIRECTOR FOR NATO AFFAIRS VAN EKELEN AND GENERAL STOKLA WHO WERE PRESENT, INDICATES THAT MAY 3 MEETING OF DUTCH AND BELGIAN PRIMINS AND SEVERAL OF THEIR MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES WAS INDECISIVE AND FROM DUTCH POINT OF VIEW HARDLY WORTH THE EFFORT.

2. IN KEEPING WITH HIS PENCHANT FOR TIGHT-LIPPED ENIGMATICISM, STOKLA IN A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SIMPLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WAS JUST AS DIVIDED OVER THE REPLACEMENT FIGHTER QUESTION AFTER THE MEETING AS BEFORE. VAN EKELEN WAS MORE EXPLICIT. HE SAID THAT IN CONTRAST TO PRIMIN DEN UYL WHO STATED CLEARLY THAT THE NETHERLANDS HAD A PREFERENCE FOR THE F-16 FOR WELL-KNOWN REASONS, PRIMIN TINDEMANNS HAD LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE TO SAY AND DEFERRED TO DEFENSE MINISTER VAN DEN BOEYNANTS WHO DID MOST OF THE TALKING.

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HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO VAN EKELEN, VANDEN BOEYNANTS'

PERFORMANCE WAS NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE AS HE TENDED WHEN ASKED A PRACTICAL QUESTION BY THE DUTCH SIDE TO JUMP IN NON SEQUITUR FASHION TO ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE ISSUE.

3. CONVERSELY, VAN EKELEN SAID MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS LUBBERS WAS THE SURPRISE STAR PERFORMER FOR THE DUTCH SIDE. AT A CERTAIN POINT IN THE PROCEEDINGS VANDEN BOEYNANTS, PRESUMABLY ON THE BASIS OF RECENT PRESS REPORTS THAT LUBBERS QUESTIONED THE OFFSET VALUE OF THE F-16, SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. LUBBERS' REPLY WHICH PULLED NO PUNCHES WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE F-16 PROPOSAL WOULD PROVIDE 100 PERCENT OFFSET FOR LOCAL COSTS AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE DEPENDING ON THE EVENTUAL TOTAL PRODUCTION RUN. LUBBERS THEREFORE CAME OUT SOLIDLY FOR THE F-16 OVER THE MIRAGE TO THE SURPRISE AND CHAGRIN OF VANDEN BOEYNANTS.

4. VAN EKELEN (WHO WAS PRESENT AS DUTCH NOTETAKER) SAID HIS PRIME MINISTER WAS VISIBLY ANNOYED BY THE DISORGANIZED NATURE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND AT ONE POINT CALLED CADIDLY UPON HIS BELGIAN HOSTS TO GIVE A LITTLE MORE STRUCTURE TO THE MEETING. ACCORDING TO VAN EKELEN DEN UYL'S IRRITATION WAS NOT IMPROVED WHEN AT THE END OF THE MEETING TINDEMANNS ASKED THE DUTCH IF THEY WOULD AGREE TO HOLD OFF ON THEIR DECISION UNTIL MAY 9 TO ALLOW THE GOB TIME FOR FURTHER INTERNAL DISCUSSION. DEN UYL REPLIED NONCOMMITTALLY THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO SEE ABOUT THAT.

5. COMMENT: VAN EKELEN, WHO LIKE EVERY OTHER RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, INCLUDING FONMIN VAN DER STOEL, IS FIRMLY IN SUPPORT OF THE F-16, SAID THAT THE ONLY DIVISION WITHIN THE GON IS BETWEEN THOSE WHO LIKE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PEOPLE RECOMMEND THAT THE NETHERLANDS MAKE A DECISION FOR THE F-16 WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY AND THOSE WHO FAVOR SOME FURTHER POSTPONEMENT IN ORDER TO GIVE DEN UYL TIME TO FORCE THE F-16 GRADUALLY DOWN THE THROAT OF THE LABOR PARTY. GIVEN THE FAST-CHANGING NATURE OF THIS FOUR-DIMENSIONAL GAME, VAN

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EKELEN DID NOT HAZARD A GUESS AS TO WHEN THE GON WOULD MAKE OR ANNOUNCE ITS DECISION BUT HE APPEARED TO HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WHEN IT CAME IT WOULD BE THE F-16.

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